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THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE VICE OF
G A M I N G,
AS THEY AFFECT
THE WELFARE OF INDIVIDUALS,
AND
THE STABILITY OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT,
CONSIDERED;

A SERMON,
PREACHED
In the CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF WINCHESTER.

By THOMAS RENNELL, D.D. *K*
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And Rector of St. MAGNUS, LONDON BRIDGE.


CRESCIT ET SERPIT QUOTIDIE MALUM; JAM MAJUS
EST QUAM UT CAPERE ID PRIVATA FORTUNA POSSIT
—AD SUMMUM REIPUBLICÆ SPECTAT. LIVY.

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1795.





TO
THE MOST NOBLE
THE MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM,
KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER
OF THE GARTER, &c. &c.

THIS DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED IN HIS PRESENCE,
AND
HONORED BY HIS PARTICULAR APPROBATION,
IS,
WITH THE HIGHEST VENERATION
FOR HIS VIRTUES AND TALENTS,
AND
THE MOST GRATEFUL SENSE
OF HIS KINDNESS AND CONDESCENSION,
INSCRIBED,
BY
HIS MOST HUMBLE AND DEVOTED SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.



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THE reception of the first Edition of the following Discourse has greatly exceeded the expectations of the author. He can however assert with much truth and sincerity, that though he is *far, very far*, from being indifferent to the public opinion, yet that a desire to preserve those who might be inclined to peruse it from a precipice of calamity and ruin was his leading and predominant motive. To have been instrumental in rescuing any *one* victim from the power and consequences of the habits of Gaming, to have awakened in any *one* instance either conjugal, parental, or filial affection, in the arresting the progress of this deadly contagion, is of infinitely greater importance to him than any judgment which may be passed on its merits as a composition.

Still, however, to the kind and candid construction of his readers, as well as to the judgment of some excellent and much
esteemed

esteemed friends, he owes some little explanation upon a point on which some objections, as he understands, have been made. He is supposed to have involved in one *common* and *undistinguishing* censure those innocent recreations which terminate merely in social amusement, and those atrocious practices by which the *formed Gamester* deals havock and ruin around him.—To this he can only answer, that he has been misunderstood—that nothing was farther from his intention. He meant not to assert that amusements of this nature where mere *recreation* properly regulated, is the sole object, were to be universally proscribed; but that *extreme care* was to be taken lest the slenderness of the partitions which *peculiarly* in the present times divide the *amusement* of cards from the *vice of Gaming*, might be most distinctly and awfully discernible. He has advanced such leading PRINCIPLES upon this subject as he is assured are incontestible upon every ground of Holy Scripture, natural humanity, and political exigency. With *nice* and *enervating* distinctions he thought it beyond his province to deal. If his PRINCIPLES are admitted,

mitted, it is for the judgment and conscience of his readers to apply them to *particular usages and practices*, as that judgment and that conscience, aided by God's grace, may direct. That they *may* so apply them as the security and true interests of themselves and those who are nearest and dearest to them demand at their hands, is the author's honest, hearty, and exclusive wish! He is far from putting in any claim, as far forth as he himself is concerned to advance religious truths of extraordinary rigor or severity. But *things and actions* must be represented as they *are*, and what was formerly said of *virtue* by an illustrious heathen, is equally applicable to christian courage and perfection. "Non ex aliorum neque ex nostrâ fortasse mollitie sed ex ipsâ virtute de virtutis robore existimandum est."

It is however a matter of considerable satisfaction and consolation to him, that the views he has taken of such *diversions* are, however inferior in power and elegance of delineation, still *similar* to those of one whose authority will be great indeed with all who have the cause of virtue, piety, and humanity

nity at heart. “*Quæ maxima semper, censetur nobis et erit quæ maxima semper.*” I have ventured to cite the passage alluded to at large from the xivth sermon of the first volume of Bishop Porteus’s Discourses ; a sermon more peculiarly adapted to the situation and circumstances of a luxurious and refined metropolis, than perhaps any the English language contains.

‘ Are all those things which go under the
 ‘ name of amusements as perfectly innocent
 ‘ as they are generally represented to be ?
 ‘ Is there not *one* diversion at least (as it is
 ‘ called) and one so predominant in the
 ‘ higher ranks of life, that it has swallowed
 ‘ up almost every other, which is big with
 ‘ the most fatal mischief ? A diversion, which,
 ‘ far different from the common run of
 ‘ amusements, has no foundation in our na-
 ‘ tural appetites ; no charms to captivate the
 ‘ fancy, or the understanding ; nothing to
 ‘ make glad the heart of man, to give him
 ‘ a chearful countenance, and refresh him
 ‘ after the cares and fatigues of duty ; but
 ‘ runs counter to reason, sense, and nature ;
 ‘ defeats all the purposes of amusement ;
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‘ sinks the spirits instead of raising them ;
 ‘ sours the temper instead of improving it :
 ‘ and, when it is carried to its utmost lengths,
 ‘ takes such entire and absolute possession of
 ‘ the soul, as to shut out every other con-
 ‘ cern both for God and man ; extinguishes
 ‘ every generous sentiment ; excites the most
 ‘ malignant passions ; provokes to the most
 ‘ profane expressions ; brings distress, some-
 ‘ times ruin, upon its wretched votaries,
 ‘ their families, friends, and dependents ;
 ‘ tempts them to use unfair, or mean, or op-
 ‘ pressive methods of retrieving their affairs ;
 ‘ and sometimes to conclude the dismal scene
 ‘ by the last fatal act of desperation. I do
 ‘ not say that gaming *always* produces these
 ‘ effects ; or that it is to all persons, in all
 ‘ circumstances, and in all its various de-
 ‘ grees, equally pernicious and unlawful.
 ‘ But it has always *a natural tendency* to these
 ‘ effects, it always exposes ourselves and
 ‘ others to great danger, and can never be
 ‘ ranked among our innocent amusements.
 ‘ Yet as such it is every day more and more
 ‘ pursued ; nay has even appropriated to it-
 ‘ self the name of *play* ; for what reason I
 ‘ know

‘ know not, unless to *play* with our lives and
 ‘ fortunes, with happiness temporal and
 ‘ eternal, be the most delectable of all human
 ‘ enjoyments.’

communicates his guilt. The sudden stroke of poverty, bitter as it is, where innocence accompanies it, may be softened by the lenient *dispensations* of an Almighty Protector. But what are the hearts of those Gamesters who train up their progeny in their GUILT, who accustom their innocent, uncorrupted minds to the daily spectacle of fraud and pillage !

Let those who as yet only stand on the brink of this misery, those who consider these meetings as AMUSEMENTS, or who comply with them merely that they may not be excluded from fashionable society, think to what poor motives they expose those innocent pledges which a kind Providence has entrusted to them. Has entrusted to them for what ?—to be the joy of their youth, the pride of their maturer years, the comfort of their age, and their alleviation even in the pangs of death. To be trained up to what ?—to be the benefactors of mankind, servants of the great and high God, and partakers with them of a glorious immortality.

To these purposes I will boldly assert that all tampering with the vice of Gaming, in every stage of it, is always dangerous, and most frequently destructive. You will say, YOU do not GAME---that you mix only with such society that you may not appear strange---that you can always restrain your-

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self from hazarding more than your circumstances will permit. To grant all these pleas, which would be sufficiently absurd, yet are you sure that your CHILDREN will have all this moderation, that THEY, when once habituated to such company, and introduced into such receptacles, will not be corrupted, pillaged, and undone? Do you REALLY expect that having early acquired the relish and skill, which a repetition of these scenes naturally produce, as they advance in years they will stop short of ruin and guilt? Can you, for the poor ambition of consorting with men of fashion, for the tinsel gratification of exhibiting your taste, prepare your dwellings for the reception and harbour of that large mixture of privileged thieves, which I am credibly informed constitute a part of such assemblies? Do not think me obtrusive in appealing to that kindly virtue which is last eradicated from the human heart. Can you CALMLY destroy all the part which you yourselves have, all the part which God has, in those whom you now look on with the eye of parental rapture? Are you reconciled to beholding them as "VESSELS FITTED FOR DESTRUCTION?" If you cannot, retreat instantaneously from the brink of the precipice on which both you and your beloved children stand. Think that in all these scenes which every day announces to us as exhibiting in the politer
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part of the Metropolis, when rank and elegance combine their powerful and fascinating delusions, when every external decoration which art and splendour can devise, is subsidiary to them---think that in the midst of these seductive scenes, you see *Ruin, Fraud, Beggary, and untimely Death*---think that you see the hand of the SUICIDE lifted against himself, and that SUICIDE your own DARING CHILD! gone forward to the bar of eternal justice as a swift witness against the AUTHORS OF HIS EXISTENCE, for having early sown in him the seeds of temporal destruction and eternal death---and THEN, if possible, think the faithful Ministers of Christ too importunate when they exhort you to flee, in the *early stages* of these calamities, as for your lives, when they warn you, even in those habits which to careless and unthinking minds appear of an indifferent tendency, not to spurn the dictates of nature and conscience, and to expose those whom God has consigned to your protection and care to the floodgates of such wickedness, anguish, and desolation!

Shall we farther explore the complicated baseness of the Gamester's mind, or does disgust recoil from the examination of that polluted mansion? If this disgust is excited, I shall by God's grace have discharged no mean part of the arduous and difficult task I have undertaken.

I will mention but *one* more of those dispositions which have appeared to me constantly to have been associated to the character of a Gamester—a quality which gives consistence and permanence to all the rest, that is a fixed, calm, and temperate IMPUDENCE, diffusing itself over every part of his conduct and deportment. This qualification is thought of so much consequence by the preceptors in this vice, as to be a matter of regular training and institution. And wise are they in their generation, for SHAME is MORAL VITALITY; where THAT survives, every pollution is delible, and every habit recoverable. Consequently with it every Gamester is in a regular state of warfare; for was he capable of feeling his own degradation, the sight of an honest man must overwhelm him with intolerable confusion. But to every internal feeling of baseness, and every external *circumstance of infamy*, he is completely reconciled *. Though he not only knows himself, but is convinced that every thinking man knows him likewise, yet under the protection of this peculiar quali-

* It was probably a conviction of the vileness and contented infamy of Gamesters, which induced some of the most esteemed commentators on the Roman law to assert the *inadmissibility of their Evidence* in a Court of Justice. This opinion is supported with great ability and force of reasoning by *Mascardus de Probationibus*, vol. 2, p. 262.

fication we shall find him occasionally and familiarly using the words FRIENDSHIP, BENEVOLENCE, PITY, and PHILANTHROPY, and at times assuming a high perfection of them, and what is still more extraordinary, we may observe the unthinking multitude with a mischievous and indolent acquiescence admitting such a claim.

But I have hitherto considered only the effects which the habit of Gaming uniformly, and almost without exception, produces upon those principles of moral virtue and natural conscience, of which even Heathen wisdom was not devoid. But of all the DISTINGUISHING DOCTRINES and all the VITAL ENERGIES of the blessed Gospel of Christ, the practice of Gaming is in its most distant stages, and in every practice which approximates to it, radically destructive. It is possible for men to make some cautious and skilful advances in it without ruining their FORTUNES or REPUTATION, but with their interest and their hopes as CHRISTIANS, and with every principle of inward piety, it is utterly irreconcilable.

First of all what is, or ought to be, the employment of the TIME of a Christian, a creature redeemed from sin and eternal death, and “born again after the image of him who created him”—carrying about him with (in the awful words of an eloquent Father of

the Church)* the sense of mortality and testimony of guilt---for whom "the Eternal Spirit is making intercessions with groans which cannot be uttered"---of a creature, whose prayers and penitence, contrition and charity, are to fill up the short span and precarious term of an earthly existence? Surely he must be guilty of a most TREMENDOUS MOCKERY of Almighty God and his Son's Gospel who can assert, that with this state, with these views and motives, an employment of nearly the HALF of every day he lives in CARDS AND DICE is consistent or compatible. Is it indeed THUS that we are to pass through a miserable and guilty world! the GUILT of which, and the MISERY of which, every Christian's time and exertions are called forth to remedy. Remember this STRONG AND PREGNANT evangelical principle, *that "ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price."* Now, with these views, look back upon your past life, look forward to your future. If you have recorded your time, examine those records. What do they exhibit---memorials of your alms and prayers, or your dedication and devotion by night and by day to occupations which can be in their best stages but trifling and unprofitable? Look at your acts of benevolence and your labours of love---in

* Homo circumferens mortalitatem suam circumferens testimonium peccati sui!---Augustini Confessiones.
instruct-

instructing the ignorant, in relieving the afflicted, in visiting the prisoner, in endeavouring to lessen that sum of corruption and guilt with which this poor short state is deluged. From these duties, or rather from these consolations, * and from those heavenly tears which constitute an earnest and anticipation of the bliss of Heaven, this miserable and frivolous employment of your time completely precludes you. No other pleasure, no other vice so entirely ingulphs the life of a Christian as this—none is so accessible at all times—so adapted to every variety of age, situation, rank, and understanding. Let me beseech you to bear the word of exhortation and admonition, be convinced that to the guilt of Gaming they are clearly obnoxious whose *hours* alone are sacrificed to it. It is not only those who risk much of their property that deserve the appellation of Gamblers, it is not those only who defraud their guests or companions ---it is those also who cheat God of their time, their Redeemer of their affections, Man of their exertions, and risk their salvation on the issue of such a miserable mispent life.

* In the exquisite language of Basil—

“Τὸ δακρυὸν τῆτο οἶονεὶ σπέρμα καὶ δανείσμα τῆς αἰωνίου χάριτος.”—*Basilii Homilia de Gratiarum Actione.*

But it is not merely that *Time* is wasted, and *Thought* withdrawn from *Religion*, but habits are acquired by these means which generate an INVETERATE AVERSION to it. AVERSION to Religion soon follows the NEGLECT of it in most cases, but in this instance commences and is co-ordinate with it. I do not pretend to any very wide experience in human life, but I scarcely ever knew any single person who had made any considerable progress in games of skill, but that in proportion to the exercise of that skill, his disinclination and disgust to Religion grew with it. Not only is religious principle supplanted, but a principle of the highest stage of contrast is supplied in its stead. Examine (you that have calmness and capacity) yourselves and your neighbours — look not only at the haunts of Gamesters, but at those contemptible and mischievous meetings, where indolence and vacancy find their daily refuge in Cards. In the midst of these, let the slightest mention be made of the real religious state of Man, of his redemption by Christ, of his state of misery and calamity prior to that redemption, of the awful looking-for of everlasting destruction to which every irreconciled sinner is exposed, with what scorn and mockery, what affected banter and real disgust would any such mention be treated. Miserable deluded Beings! do you think that the expression

pression of “ *always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus,*” of “ *passing the time of your sojourning here in FEAR,*” are precepts, like those of the Stoicks of old, founded on impracticable paradoxes, or that they are the commands of God who supplieth Power to all those who have the Will to practise them? But you will say, Devotion and Prayer have their intervals. I grant it, but not intervals of doing mischief, not intervals of sowing the seeds of vices, which in farther stages of their progress scatter destruction and misery, not intervals which every time they occur render you more and more indisposed to the Word, to the Worship, and to the Dispensations of Almighty God. But be fair with yourselves—with what PAIN is it that you who are thus engaged, particularly as you proceed in those courses, recur not only to SPIRITUAL, but even to FORMAL devotion? The very few stated decencies, those poor wrecks of Religion, which this age of Apostacy has left, are grown intolerable to you. I wish to be understood to speak of the employment of *Thought*, as I did of the employment of *Time*, that this shipwreck of our Christian principles commences at a period long before the generality of men will allow that they are at all tainted with the vice of Gaming. The mind of one immersed in Cards soon becomes vacant, frivolous, and captious.

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The habits form a strange mixture of mock gravity and pert flippancy. The understanding, by a perpetual attention to a variety of unmeaning combinations, acquires a kind of pride in this bastard employment of the faculty of thought, which is so far from having any analogy to the real exercise of reason, that we generally find a miserable eminence in it attainable by the dullest, most ignorant, and most contemptible of mankind. The Gamester however frequently mistakes this skill for general acuteness, and from that conceit either totally rejects the Gospel evidence, or if political or professional considerations render this indecent or inexpedient, he harbours all that contemptible chicane, all that petty sophistry, all that creeping evasion, with which a selfish heart, and a contracted understanding, meets and embraces the prevailing heresy of the times in which we live*; degrading the dignity, enervating the motives, and destroying the consolations of

* The Connexion between the artifices of Gamesters, and the shifting depravity of Heretical subterfuge, is strongly marked by the Apostle—

—“ περιφερομενοι παντι ανεμω της διδασκαλιας εν τη ΚΥΒΕΙΑ των ανθρωπων.—Ephes. iv. 14.

This same Analogy was so striking as to attract the notice of various commentators on this passage in the early ages of the Christian Church. Thus Oecumenius in cap. iv. ad Ephesios—

ΚΥΒΕΤΤΑΙ λογων λεγονται οι μεν ποτε τελο, ποτε δε εκεινο διδασκοντες και μεταβαινοντες αιει απο ταυτ εις ταυτα πανηγως. Τοιουτοι οι ΑΙΠΕΤΙΚΟΙ.

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the Cross of Christ. If therefore a Gamester ever makes profession of Religion, it is with such teachers and with such doctrines that he finds his mind most congenial. To real Christianity and its Ministers his enmity is lasting and virulent, because these are in strong and direct opposition to his favorite vice. But it is seldom that he stops here. As the crimes with which Gaming is connected are destructive of every *detached* portion of Christian piety, so is the *general habit* to the *whole spirit* of it. There is scarcely a positive precept of Christianity which is not violated in the course of a Gamester's career. Trust in Providence is expelled by a course of action, in which though he embarks perpetually his most important interest, he dares not look up in any stage to God for favour or protection. Can he "set God always before him;" that God whose name and whose Gospel are never mentioned by him but to give energy to imprecation, or zest to mockery? As contrary therefore as *Dignity* is to *Baseness*, *Pity* to *Callousness*, *Calmness* to *Distraction*, *Fraud* to *Integrity*, *Revenge* to *Placability*, *Hope* to *Despair*, so contrary is Gaming to the spirit and tenor of Religion in ALL its degrees and modifications. I am convinced that the justice of these observations will not be contested by the ADEPTS in this vice, who would receive
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with a smile of apathy any suggestions of their guilt as Christians.

But the point I wish to labour, and the effect I principally have in view in this representation, is to warn those who are in distant stages of the same progress, and who have not yet calmly acquiesced in a surrender of every hope and consolation of Religion. To such I would say in much affection, and in the face of the unpopularity which such doctrines may occasion, that all occupations of this kind render man *guilty* before God at a time when both fashion and custom pronounce them *innocent*. That the very design of those flippant miserable meetings is, to intercept all the awful views which it is the purpose of Religion to display, and to annihilate the habits which a Christian should form. I should further suggest, that with the *incipient* stages of this vice, all the *subsequent* ones are connected. The skill acquired, and the principles sown, while *diversion* only is in view, soon expand themselves into the adult and vigorous growth of guilt and profligacy, which defies both God and Man. Against all excesses you protest, but for those excesses you assimilate the soil, you trench the ground, you scatter the seed; and are you not answerable for the *increase*? Permit me to assure you, that if for the sake of a trifling and

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and degrading amusement, you are prepared to disseminate this mischief both temporal and eternal, you exhibit in your OWN PERSONS the most overbearing instance of that brutal and unfeeling texture of mind which these miserable habits soon produce. Remember therefore the saying of him who warns you that between such practices and every religious obligation "THERE IS A GREAT GULPH FIXED;" that in endeavouring to reconcile a life addicted to them with the smallest portion of religious hope, you are trifling with your conscience most palpably and egregiously.

Art thou a CHRISTIAN then and devoted to these things? * Be not deceived by the *levity* of these meetings, but esteem them to be most *awfully* and essentially wicked. Look at the miseries of the latter end of a Gamester's career, and dread them for Thyself and thy CHILDREN: For I can venture to assure thee, that as no other course of crimes is attended with a more obstinate and obdurate scorn and contempt of God's Word, his Worship and his Providence, so there is none against which the vengeance of Heaven is more keenly and visibly exerted, nor any in which the punishment more quickly and invariably follows the crime. A day,

* Aleator quicumque es & Christianum te dicis?—
Cyprianus ibidem.

perhaps

perhaps an hour, reverses plenty, security, and credit, into penury, ignominy, and despair, aggravated by the unutterable anguish of having drawn those whom they ought to have supported and protected into the same gulph of destruction. The punishment of the Gamester, like that of CAIN of old, is "*greater than he can bear.*" Either the pangs of his recollection drive him to that last fatal act for which "*no place for repentance*" is found, or he drags on a sordid existence, supported by decoying others into the same snares by which his own ruin has been effected, carrying about with him a MORAL WRECK (for such is the breast of every Gamester) till the measure of his iniquity is full. O reflect then in time! "*that which a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*"—Think how improbable it is, that you who have carelessly and wantonly sacrificed every principle of duty to God, and benevolence to Man, to a poor wretched *amusement*, should escape his awful and tremendous justice. If for *this* thou canst brave the fears of final impenitence in this world, and of everlasting destruction in the next, the Apostle only can speak with the energy of divine grace to thy feared conscience—"O wretched Man that thou art, who shall deliver Thee from the body of this death!"

I have now, with all seriousness, endeavoured distinctly to point to those effects which

which I have observed to be produced by the vice of Gaming on INDIVIDUALS, it remains for me to consider its consequences as they affect the stability and order of CIVIL GOVERNMENT, and the public and social influence of the HOLY RELIGION we profess.

In entering upon this part of my subject, I would not be thought to acquiesce in that mischievous distinction, invented by Knaves and current only with Fools; a distinction I mean between PRIVATE and PUBLIC morals, as if any vice or mode of immorality could exist, which doth not by *some channel* convey its poison to the body politic. In some instances the mischief done is slow and circuitous, not producing a visible effect till the accumulated accessions of many generations have ripened and matured these deadly seeds. But the vice of gaming strikes *immediately* at the vitals of public virtue, public order, and public happiness. The connexion between causes and effects are *here* direct and palpable. It gives vigour, efficacy, and activity to every other public vice, communicating and receiving reciprocal support. To the receptacles of Gamesters, luxury, debauchery, and extravagance, fly for refuge and recovery from that ruin which unbridled libertinism has entailed upon them. On the contrary, to drown the pangs of remorse and keen anguish of conscience, the Gamester plunges by intervals into the foulest

foulest abyfs of fenfuality and riot. Hence follows the moft deplorable corruption amongft Thofe whose bias and determination to Good or Evil, is the protection or ruin of a WHOLE COMMUNITY. To the integrity and independence of men of rank and opulence, a free ftate looks for whatever is upright in conduct, found in determination, fafe in practice, and beneficial in confequence. The greater the number of fuch men who fill either the executive departments of a State, or who partake of the office of Legislators, the greater the ftability of that country. Should it fall to the lot of fuch men to project political meafures, it will be done with foresight and reflection—should it be their province to examine or even to oppofe thofe planned by others, that examination and oppofition will be conducted with firmnefs, devoid of acrimony, and will be of fuch a mitigated nature as never to endanger the fafety of the whole. The confcioufnefs of integrity will fupply calmnefs, and the deep intereft they have in the welfare of their country, will ensure caution and difcretion in all their movements and defigns. But what is it that leffens the number of fuch invaluable members of fociety? What is it that converts Thofe defigned by Providence to be the GUARDIANS and PROTECTORS, into the BANE and CURSE of their Country? I will

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answer---

answer---the GAMING TABLE. The reverses here every moment occurring, unite beggar-ed fortunes, mortified pride, callous baseness, and enflamed appetites, directing their joint operations to the destruction of that common mother which gave them birth.--- And here I wish to be rightly understood—that with a frugal, active, dignified poverty, the discharge of public duty is perfectly compatible. Such a poverty was highly revered in the best ages of Pagan antiquity, as the nurse of every great and useful exertion: but as distant as light from darkness is such a poverty from that degraded, malevolent, abject MENDICITY, the offspring of vice, the organ of faction, and the parent of universal prostitution and venality. To preserve the most venerable council of the nation from the mischiefs and disgrace accruing from such members, was one of the most important functions of the Censorian Magistracy in ancient Rome*. To those Magistrates were committed the power of

* “ Every Lustrum, *i. e.* at the end of every fifth year, the Senate was reviewed by one of the Censors, and if any one had rendered himself unworthy of that high rank, or *had sunk his fortune below that of a Senator*, his name was passed over by the Censor in reading the roll of Senators; and thus he was held to be excluded from the Senate.”—*Vide Adams's accurate and well digested System of Roman Antiquities*, p. 6.—*Vide also Æschines in Timarchum passim.*

removing those Senators who had reduced themselves to indigence by profligacy or extravagance. Similar instances of wise caution are to be traced in the Athenian polity, which abundantly provided checks against those whose prodigality and beggary might make their interference in public affairs dangerous or prejudicial. It is difficult indeed to conceive what interest any one ruined by a course of vice can have in the welfare of his country : It is still more difficult to conceive that this regard should exist in Gamesters. Any claim to patriotism in such men, furnishes perhaps one of the most STUPENDOUS instances of impudence in asserting, and of dupery in admitting it, which the records of human folly and depravity any where exhibit. For not only do they, by the misapplication of their *own* talents, and the operation of their *own* malignant passions, deeply injure that country which they so vehemently and loudly profess to serve, but by drying up the vital sources of public integrity, and depriving it of that future harvest of virtue, to which its fondest expectations were directed. For it is always observable, that the Principals in this vice soon enlist large troops of accomplices in their service, by spreading among the noble and opulent youth their crimes, misery, and despondency, uniting them in similar views and associations for the same de-

detestable ends. In viewing the desolation spread by such men, in considering the base incitements with which they pre-occupy the ingenuous hearts of the rising generation, and reconcile them to their trade and infection, the watchfulness with which they select their victims and disciples in the earliest stages of manhood, in beholding the rising hopes of our country so blighted and blasted, well may we say of our unhappy land---“ *In Rama there was a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning! Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not.*” More wretched still than that disconsolate mourner! Happier they who weep the death of their *departed*, than they who feel the parricidal wounds inflicted by their *degenerate* offspring!

It is only in such schools that can be formed that true callousness which can anticipate all the calamities of civil discord with the calmest indifference, which having long dealt in private, can extend its efforts to national ruin and pillage. This transition is easy and natural: such in all ages have been those by whom the peace of flourishing and free communities have been disturbed, their properties invaded, and their liberties destroyed. These are they who, under the mask of patriotism, pant for civil convulsion and proscription, for which the whole texture of their habits have previously disposed

them. While therefore men of this description abound, it is utterly impossible that any State can be in permanent security, it is impossible that those principles of subordination, which are essential to the happiness of Mankind, can be maintained while many in the higher orders are given to this destructive habit. Those who wish for anarchy and misery, those to whom public prosperity is a source of despair, and public confusion an object of hope and exultation, act wisely and consistently enough when they encourage and promote this horrible contagion. The beggary, the degradation, the despair, the malignancy of those whom they assemble and associate, are their natural weapons, and render them fit instruments of their plunging and atrocious projects. The young men into whose intimacy they insinuate themselves, cannot be the organs of their purposes, till their habits are debased, their property pillaged, and their consciences obliterated. This it is which has united so many among us, in the furtherance of those abandoned principles of anarchy and sedition, which are the natural consequences of that mass of vices, of which Gaming is corner stone.

This it is which has for many years past been preparing the materials for that tremendous conflagration which threatens every nation in Europe, and has already overwhelmed

whelmed the most flourishing, populous, and civilized of its kingdoms. Of ruined Gamblers we are told that the crew of Catiline was principally composed* ; and recent observation, drawn from the best attested facts, will inform us, that amidst all the unparalleled crimes which the miserable Revolution in France has produced, this has been in its turn the cause, and in its turn the effect, of them all. To the Gaming Table, I am told by eye-witnesses, was regularly brought the fruits of public confiscation, cruelty, and proscription.

Those therefore who have the same views and designs, whom no experience of the guilt and misery which such principles have spread in that devoted land which gave them birth, those who have steeled their breasts to the groans, the anguish, and the destruction of their countrymen, act conformably to their views and character in practising and encouraging that vice, which, above all others, assists their predatory and sanguinary projects. BUT it is most astonishing *indeed*,

* This sufficiently appears from the invaluable account which Sallust has transmitted to us of the Catalinarian conspiracy, many parts of which unfortunately appear to be rather a *description* of *present* than a *history* of *past* events. " Quicumque impudicus, adulter, ganeo, ALEA manu, ventre bona patria laceraverat quique alienum æs grande conflaverat—Hi Catalinæ proximi familiaresque erant." De Bello Catalinario.

that those who have a remaining interest in the welfare of their Country, who have humanity unextinguished, who have loyalty to their Prince in their hearts, and love of order and constitutional liberty yet unimpaired, should not see and avow the absolute necessity of immediately withdrawing from every avenue to this accursed vice, and from those associations which in the full order of legislative and preceptive form teach the principles and arrange the practice of it. Such should be well aware, that while this pestilence is in its vigour, neither the wisest counsels can long protract, nor the most active exertions finally avert the evils which threaten us. Here, therefore, ruin *must* be resisted—here only it *can* be resisted. Before the lower ranks of men can be brought back to that respect for their superiors which can alone ensure peace and happiness both to high and low, they must cease to render themselves vile in the eyes of men by the degradation, the beggary, and the meanness which the Gaming Table entails upon them. They must abandon their base companions and nocturnal haunts, and return to the native munificence and generosity which in times of old endeared them to the poor and needy, and were the firmest barrier of their property and privileges. Oh that the Great could but “in this their day of visitation” hear the friendly voice of one,
I
whose

whose life and ministry have been uniformly dedicated to promote those principles of loyalty and subordination which it is the purpose of the enemies of this country to vilify and subvert! Oh that they could be aware how much, by their indulgencies in this favorite vice, they further the designs of those whose malignant activity is evidently directed to plunder, confiscation, and anarchy!

But in none of the effects of Gaming is a more deadly wound inflicted, than by the utter destruction of that principle of NATIONAL Religion, without which the whole structure of social order dissolves and perishes. I know how fertile this age of innovation in which we live is of new opinions and sentiments upon the connexion between Religion and Government: But whatever the pertness of paradox may object, the voice of the most venerable antiquity, both sacred and profane, combines with the awful experience of recent and striking events in assuring us, that when the chain which unites the creature to the Creator is broken and interrupted, when LAW is separated from the SOURCE OF LEGISLATION, then union is impossible, and dissolution inevitable. Religion as it is the perfection of individuals, so is it the preservation of communities. Whatever therefore counteracts its effects, and obstructs its progress, strikes at the very vitals of civil society. But neither the so-

phistry of infidelity, the refinements of luxury, or the lures of pleasure, have contributed so much to wrest all awe of God from the minds of men, as this single vice of Gaming. I now speak of social Religion, beginning with families, and extending itself through various gradations to more comprehensive associations, till it embraces that most enlarged community, which may be denominated national or political.

And first, what is it which has disturbed that beautiful appearance of family piety, which was of old the ornament of our English nation, and constituted part of its public character: when each morning and evening the master of a family assembled with a patriarchal and primeval dignity his children and domestics, to praise the Author of the abundant blessings showered down upon them? How every relation and dependency derived reciprocal sanctity and force! How this salutary practice contributed through the channels of private principle to augment the stock of public happiness and security! But now instruction and admonition are no more! These pious exercises are supplanted by the occupation of Cards and Dice; in this occupation the NIGHT frequently closes, while numerous trains of domestics are abandoned to all the profaneness, debauchery, and corruption, which the streets of a luxurious and profligate Metropolis exhibits. Thus is
God

God deserted in the first instance. But who are they who break in upon his Sabbath, that last bulwark of decaying religion which still remains? I too well know the loose and licentious doctrines which have been disseminated with regard to the observance of this sacred day, which God (by the first command given to Man) consecrated to his worship and the uninterrupted meditation on his word. I have heard with infinite pain, the strict observation of this day (that peculiar glory of the PROTESTANT RELIGION, that duty in which the English Church has been most eminent and exemplary) censured as overstrained and puritanical. I have heard all abstinence from amusement represented as gloomy and melancholy, and opinions broached on this subject which would soon precipitate this nation into the same depth of Apostacy in which a neighbouring country is plunged. With such an indifference to the misery of mankind, and to the judicial dispensations of Almighty God, it is in vain to contend: But to those who *still* feel for *themselves* and *others*, I would with all eagerness suggest, that of all habits which withdraw Men from the public furtherance of Religion on this day, Gaming is among the foremost—I would say, that, as to desert the worship of Almighty God for such diversions, is a mark of the most flagrant Apostacy; so any attempt to recon-

cile

cile an attendance upon the one, with a practice of the other, is a most insulting mockery of the commands of God. It is to sap the foundations of all Religion in those who are within the sphere of your influence; it is to devote those who among the lower ranks are corrupted by your example to the pangs and ignominy of an untimely death, which a violation of the Sabbath is well known in its consequences to draw down upon them. May Almighty God, by his preventing grace, bring it home to the hearts of all those in the higher ranks, who carelessly or contemptuously devote themselves to this practice on the Sabbath, how they will wish, when their great account is to be given in the hour of death and the day of judgment, that they had been, "*innocent of the blood of all Men!*"

But the greatest mischief this accursed vice can effect is when any considerable portion of those whose labours are dedicated to the sacred Ministry should ever be overcome by its contagion. With all the dignity, the power, the energy and efficacy of professional character, the vice of Gaming is in every degree and in every mode utterly incompatible. To any of its encroachments the Catholic Church, through the whole current of pure and primitive antiquity, opposed a most dignified resistance: It turned with an awful and averted front from those of its degenerate

degenerate children upon whom the slightest contamination rested; it prohibited under the severest penalties even the presence of its Ministers at scenes where their virtue and fidelity were so deeply endangered. Neither has that sound and eminent part of it, our English Church, which both in its doctrines and discipline doth not want a true Apostolical seal, been backward in its censures. To the large portion of pious and exemplary Ecclesiastics, who really love those doctrines they teach, and the Master whom they serve, I am convinced that God in his Scriptures, and Christ in his Church, will not, cannot speak in vain. At all times for Dice and Cards, even were they of a nature which did not derogate from the dignity of our high vocation and ministry, we have, or ought to have very few intervals. We have in the best ages much vice to reform, much calamity to comfort, much ignorance to enlighten, much wilfulness to subdue—but, O gracious God! in these times how is the arduous task increased, how are our best exertions called for—to recover from Atheism and Anarchy a perishing and sinking world, to counteract those seeds of revolt from God, which have shaken the foundations of civil society, and deluged Europe with seas of human blood—how intense should be our charity, how fervent our aspirations, how wakeful our conduct, how incessant

incessant our prayers ! But I will leave it to the consideration of every reflecting man, how by a perpetual devotion of our time to cards and amusements, we intercept those awful views of sin and calamity from ourselves and others, which alone can give energy to our labours. It becomes us to be well aware that our habits should be formed, our hearts prepared, our views enlarged, and our resolution strengthened, for all that we may be called upon to *do*, and all that Providence may destine us to *suffer*, in support of that faith we profess, and that Gospel which we preach. In particular, let not THESE SACRED RETREATS, the monuments of ancient piety and munificence, be degraded by a *silly affectation* of fashionable manners and fashionable vices, and peculiarly of “ *that Sin which doth so easily beset us.*”—Prayer and meditation, study and retirement, charity and dignified hospitality, are *equally* excluded, by a constant round of cards and dissipation. Oh may these ORNAMENTAL, these NOBLE, and when applied to their proper ends these USEFUL institutions, never be brought into disrepute by the folly and fault of a few. Let me not seem in this “ *as one that mocketh,*” for I cannot but think that every serious Minister of Christ must consider this awful passage of St. Paul as exhibiting a strong analogy to the present circumstances of himself and his brethren—
“ *for*

“ *for I think God hath set forth the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the World, and to Angels, and to Men.*” I must suggest, that to such a situation even the *distraction* of the generality of amusements is sufficiently uncongenial and indecorous—much more the prevalence of ONE, which I firmly believe has contributed more in its consequences and dependencies to overwhelm the earth with confusion and bloodshed, than the united force of all the powers of HELL and DARKNESS. May the Ministers of Christ, with enlarged hearts, purified affections, and humble penitence, meet all the high duties which the times impose, and face all those dangers which they threaten! May we either be thought worthy, as the Levitical Priesthood, to “*stand between the dead and the living, and the plague be ceased;*” or if God shall, in his inscrutable decrees, have thrown us on those times when “*the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up,*” may we be able to possess our souls in firm resignation, and unshaken hope, looking according to his promise for “*new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*”

TO

TO CONCLUDE.

Happy they who have escaped the pollutions of the world by sin in this important point! Happy they whom the powerful and controuling GRACE of God (without which all *moral precepts* are but a dead letter) has arrested in these courses, convincing them of "*the things appertaining unto their peace before they are hid from their eyes for ever!*"

But thrice happy they whom elevation of rank, splendour of station, and the possession of extended property, have enabled to contribute a powerful and decisive influence in checking this wretched career of guilt and woe! Who, in the service of God and of Mankind, have discountenanced habits, and sacrificed amusements, apparently innocent, to this great, this glorious, this benevolent purpose! THIS will give them unspeakable consolation and joy at those tremendous moments, when all earthly distinctions shall cease, and all earthly pleasures are for ever passed and gone. "*They shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*"

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